

# March of Olives: The Halsey Affair

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Summary: After the Humans, the Flood, and the Covenant, Kalimee must battle his feelings of the other members of his unit, including a new Elite. With ONI again eager to send the 305th to their deaths, Kalimee sets out to reface the Spartans.

## 1. Nakumee

Fort Polaski, somewhere North of Sarajevo

0620 Hours, August 6, 2553 (Military Calendar)

First Lieutenant Kartek Kalimee walked down the long corridor. It wasn't a happy corridor, nor was it eloquent, simply drywall and a few cheap wood doors. Noone was ever really comfortable here, the very reason the Office of Naval Intelligence found it so attractive.

It was the tenth door on the left from the elevator Kalimee entered. Inside was a small oak desk, a hologram console, and a well built imposing man in a black uniform. He wore the epaulettes and bearing of a Colonel.

"Good morning, Lieutenant," he said coldly. "I suppose you may be wondering why you have been summoned here.

"Yes Ec," the puzzled Elite said flatly, "Sir," he amended. The Colonel was not amused.

"I am James Ackerson. Now to get started."

The Colonel pushed a few buttons and an image appeared filling the majority of the room. It was of a lengthy ship, with lots of odd ends and angles.

"This is a Chiroptera-class vessel, it disappeared a little more than a year ago."

The vessel had been floating in the image for some time, but now it tore through the virtual sky and disappeared into slipspace. Kalimee watched this all with quiet puzzlement.

"It left known space with two wanted fugitives onboard: Petty Officer First Class SPARTAN-087, and former ONI consultant Catherine Halsey, ID 10141-026-SRB4695. ONI Section Three wants that ship and its passengers.

"Sir?"

"Are you questioning my competence in handing out assignments?"

"No, Sir," Kalimee said defensively.

"Good. The prowler \_Isis \_has been modified and extended to provide more room accommodate you and your troops.

"Sir..."

"You are to proceed in the \_Isis \_to the Eridanus system, the last known location of this craft. There, you are to collect any and all information to determine where the ship went, and then follow, secure the ship and those aboard it, then return to this system for immediate court martial. You are authorized to use deadly force if they refuse to cooperate. Food Nipples, plasma batteries, and other supplies are already being transported to the \_Isis. \_That is all." Kalimee left the room and walked back to the elevator.

\_Spartans. That brings back memories. Painful ones. \_

For the first time since his days on Cartairus, Kalimee felt true sorrow.

Flanked by military police armed with stun batons and M6C pistols, the Grunt was led from the new shuttle bay on the ONI stealth ship \_Isis \_to the officer's mess where several humans and two Elites were talking quietly. The soldiers entered with the grunt.

"The new Grunt is here, Commander," the senior of the two said. The Grunt looked around in bewilderment.

"We picked this one up after the flying pyramid showed up, Section Three's done with 'em. He has been transferred to this unit.

"Very well," Lieutenant Kalimee said. What is this Unggoy's designation?"

"Me, Mehkep," the grunt said in a scared yet high voice.

"You're with Hakimee's unit," Kalimee said, gesturing to his second. Kalimee thought for a minute. "Show this one to the squad chamber." Hakimee left with the grunt.

"Can we go on with the briefing?" the commanding officer of the \_Isis, \_a full man with a sometimes fiery temperament.

"There is another, sir," a soldier said.

"Another?" the skipper scowled.

"Another Grunt?" Kalimee asked.

"No, Sir."

An Elite walked in. It wore the same olive-drab armor 305th officers of the 305th wore.

"Naba Nakumee, reporting to First Lieutenant Kartek Kalimee." It said flatly.

"Yes. Second Lieutenant?"

"Yes, Excellency, vehicle specialist."

Kalimee was disturbed by the voice. It was a Sangheili alright, but the pitch was wrong. A little higher, too minute a difference for a human ear to hear. The two looked into each other's eyes for a few seconds. Then it struck him: It was a female.

"Do we have female quarters?" Kalimee turned to the ONI skipper. The fierce jaw dropped.

"N. No." he said as he rose his head in wonderment, quietly swearing under his breath.

"I will prepare some." With that he left.

"You will be in second squad with Hakimee and Hoke. We don't have enough Unggoy to prepare a third.

"I understand," Nakumee said understandingly, as if she knew all along she was a techie. "I will be in another room if I am needed. I understand we are departing soon." Kalimee nodded.

"Alright."

Commander Matthew McTallow sat in his command chair in the small bridge of the Isis. Not claustrophobic or even very small, just small. On either side were two bridge officers manning consoles. Lieutenant Commander Kaller at navigation, the second officer at the fire control console, and two young Ensigns on the right side operating the communications suite.

"Reactor at 30, Commander. It'll take us a few more seconds to start up with the extra bulk.

"Carry on," McTallow replied calmly. He had been against adding the extra thirty meters to his ship which was required for the hangar and ODST pods.

"Are the slipspace calculations set Kaller?"

"Yes, Sir." Ready to jump in five.

McTallow had asked why he hadn't been given an AI for this mission, other prowlers did, but Section Three didn't need to explain its actions.

"Go."

Mehmep sat on the floor in a squad room contentedly drinking from his food nipple. The UNSC issued him one but he preferred the old one he had drunk since he was conscripted. He still couldn't understand what the big starship or the green thing was the Prophet was holding...but, now the humans had something other than Crest toothpaste to fill the nipples with he was fine in his little world.

It took two days for the \_Isis \_to reach the Eridanus system. They arrived and greeted by a panoramic view of debris and chunks of rock. All sorts of junk was floating out there, the remains of the pirate base visited by the Spartan.

"Damn," McTallow said quietly as Kalimee, Hakimee, and Nakumee walked into the already crowded bridge.

"Have you determined the target's exit vector?" Kalimee asked the Commander.

"No," McTallow growled. "We've started a long ranged scan. Come back in a few hours." Kalimee thought back to his first encounter with shotguns, he felt the same blow from this dismissal.

"May I remind you," Kalimee said in frustration, "that I have tactical command of this operation?"

"It's my ship, Lieutenant," the skipper shot back. "I am also the ranking officer," he said coldly. Kalimee clicked his mandibles in disgust and left the bridge with the two other Elites.

"Do you have anything for us yet, Ensign?"

"No, Sir." The shrimpy man at the sensor console replied. "A few old drive trails and a few old fuel rods leaking radiation, but no flight recorders, Covenant wreckage, or anything else to imply the ship was here."

"Carry on then."

"Aye, Sir."

McTallow walked back to his small room two meters aft of the room for a drink, after having a few shots he slowly walked back and sat down in his command chair. A few of the bridge crew were whispering amongst themselves.

"Sir," Kaller piped up.

"What is it, Lieutenant?" Kaller paused for a minute to look back at his station.

"Sir," he began. "We've found something."

Kalimee didn't know \_why \_he strayed over to women's quarters, he just did. He was even less unsure why he decided to stop at the new Elite's door. Was he simply evaluating the soldier? Was he simply going for a visit? Kalimee shook his head. He knew he'd never let any

emotions get in the way of his duty. She was expendable, he was expendable, Cartairus had taught him that, as did his Covenant training.

He knocked, the voice a notch too low answered.

"Who is there?" It asked.

"Me," nothing else would have sounded right, yet the damage was done.

"Yes, Excellency?"

Kalimee needed to make something up, anything to cover his tracks.

"I wanted to make sure you were okay."

"We are on a starship."

"Yes," Kalimee answered gravelly.

"Come in."

"What?" Kalimee asked, completely caught by surprise.

"Why would I want to do that, soldier?"

"I know why you are here."

"You don't," Kalimee said defensively, and with that he left.

Hakimee had watched the whole thing from a spot down the corridor. He knew his commander had been a little disturbed by having a female in his unit. Hakimee himself hadn't seen a female since his escape from High Charity with Kalimee and the rest of the 305th. It was an odd feeling, being around females. Leave was rare in the Covenant.

Hakimee started walking down towards his own quarters, failing to notice the his commanding officer had decided to take the long way 'home.' Hakimee didn't even hear him until they met in a corridor intersection.

"Excellency."

"Lieutenant Hakimee."

"Gotten to know the additions?"

"No." Kalimee marched away.

\_He doesn't know what he is getting himself into.\_

\_The armored human fell at Kalimee's feet. Its green armor and helmet white-hot from numerous plasma hits.\_

\_Kalimee had no time to celebrate as several shots impacted his shield, he did the only thing to do, rush the enemy. Concentrating

his plasma fire on one human, another demon was downed. \_

\_About two-thirds of the ten Elites, twelve Jackals, and twenty-nine Grunts involved in the attack had been lost. The armored humans were putting up a good fight, futile as it was.\_

\_One of the humans, this one carrying a shotgun, rushed Kalimee. A few blast killed the Unggoy accompanying the Elite and Kalimee ducked to avoid another shot. Rasing himself, Kalimee performed a quick uppercut, then strafed to avoid the majority of the next shell. A few pellets hit him, downing what was left of his shield supply. \_

\_The Spartan jabbed Kalimee in the face, drawing blood. Kalimee clubbed the human and made off two shots into it until he was thrown to the ground. Damn those humans! Stealing our lords' creations. The Human drew the butt of its rifle and prepared to crush Kalimee's head when it faltered, turned, and was downed by a fourth plasma shot. Kalimee rose starting with his head and shoulders to see Hakimee standing over him.\_

"\_Good hunting."\_

"\_Y-Yes," Kalimee stuttered.\_

"\_I'll call a dropship..."\_

"\_No," Kalimee croaked, "There are more humans to kill."\_

"\_It's over."\_

"\_What?"\_

"\_It is, Excellency."\_

"Excellency, Excellency..."

"W-What?" Kalimee returned to the world of now.

"Excellency, it's the Commander, he's found something."

## 2. The Stuff of Legend

"What have you got Commander," Kalimee asked as he entered the bridge,

"Data recorder, four hundred kilometers off."

"Any way to retrieve it?"

"Someone needs to go EVA," McTallow replied, looking towards the Elites on his bridge. "We've got your species' suits all powered up. Volunteers?"

Kalimee sighed. "Hakimee, you're with me, we're grabbing that recorder, Nakumee, stay here.

Naba Nakumee lowered her eyes and let her mandibles twitch in frustration.

"I didn't come here to watch you complete the objective alone."

"You're staying here."

"Fine," she huffed, then turned and quickly walked away.

Kalimee felt his stomach move to other parts of his body as he and Hakimee catapulted out of the \_Isis. \_They activated they're jetpacks and used several short, controlled bursts to maneuver themselves towards the black box.

Shields flared as the two rocketed through various debris. Kalimee saw it ahead, about half a meter long and thirty centimeters wide, it was a greyish, olive-green. Unfortunately this olive-green was coming in to fast.

Kalimee turned around and fired a burst of rocket to reduce his velocity. One arm reached out for the box as another burst brought him to a near halt.

Finally he grasped it tightly, and fired a ten second burn to rocket back to the ship, with Hakimee in close pursuit.

"Watch it!" Kalimee looked up just in time to smash into a chunk of hull from a destroyed ship. His shields died and he was sent flying away from home. Kalimee positioned himself and fired another burst, careful to calculate the required vector. He was surprised to start spinning clockwise. The rocket motor behind his right shoulder had malfunctioned. Kalimee hit another piece of twisted metal, his recharging shields drained again, and fuel started spitting out of his suit.

"Hakimee. Help.." He attempted to correct his egression but failed miserably. He still had the black box in his hand, a lot of good that would do. He hit an old ether canister and blacked out.

It felt like an eternity but really it was only a few seconds. Kalimee slowly opened his eyes to greet the familiar slits in the environment suit. Outside was another Elite in the silver suit, clutching him tightly with both rockets activated and firing a lengthy burn.

"Excellency," a voice mused. Kalimee's mandibles widened. It was Nakumee.

"I though..."

"Never send a male for something so trivial as data extraction," the slightly-too-high voice said in mock disgust. Kalimee couldn't help but be slightly amused...slightly. It was after all comforting in a way.

After a few hundred kilometers and several burns, the two finally entered the new hangar bay of the prowler \_Isis. \_Nakumee set her feet on the deck, deactivated her suit, and let the barely conscious Lieutenant Kalimee fall to the deck. Even in the suit he was a special case, she decided. Yes, she had plenty of contact with the other sex, onboard Covenant starships, but something was special here. No, he was just yet another superior too confident of his own

abilities. Nothing more. \_And nothing less.\_

Kalimee couldn't understand it. Why had we allowed his attention to stray? Sure Hakimee had more experience in zero gravity situations, but Kalimee had still done it before in sims. And why did Nakumee insist on defying her orders to come after him? What was a female doing onboard anyway?

Kalimee shook his head. He should have never allowed her to stay. She was just a distraction, she didn't belong here, she should have been on the next Pelican out. Command said she was a vehicle specialist, why did he need a vehicle specialist?

Kalimee remembered watching Elites return from a leave, they talked of 'tests' using females, means to determine who was dedicated to the Great Journey, but the humans had a fully integrated military, they had for some time now. Were they simply unaware of Sangheili culture? How would his ambivalence towards this Elite affect the outcome of this mission?

The door of Kalimee's cabin opened.

"We've deciphered the data recorder, Excellency," Hakimee said. "The commander wants you on the bridge straight away."

Kalimee nodded. "Tell him I will be there soon."

"What do you have for us, Commander?" Nakumee was saying as Kalimee entered the encryption room adjacent the bridge. The data recorder and decryption equipment lined the walls of the small chamber and several ONI men in uniforms devoid of insignia surrounded Nakumee, Hakimee, and Commander McTallow. The Commander acknowledged Kalimee's presence with a nod and replied to Nakumee's inquiry.

"We have decrypted the recorder, it belongs to a Pelican dropship. A \_pirate \_dropship," he added. He continued.

"Chief, play that tape." The ONI man closest to the equipment pushed a button and a scratchy yet coherent voice started speaking.

\_There are so many of them...Seraphs...uisers,  
everything...wait...what's that? Oh my god, it's the Governor's ship!  
Slipspace rupture...gone...the goddamned thing's  
gone...wait...no...gone...Two-Three-Five...from Earth...wait...no!

—

Everyone cringed as the recording ended in a blast and static.

"We now have an exit vector for the fugitive ship," the Commander continued. "No we just need a destination."

\_Wait a minute.\_

"I think I know where they went," Kalimee said for all to hear.

Everyone went dead quiet. All eyes turned to Kalimee.

"What was that you said, Lieutenant?" McTallow asked. Kalimee took a deep breath.



"There are legends," he began. "Of a world, even the Forerunners dared not go. A world of fire and metal," Kalimee took another deep breath. "It is said," he continued. "That those foolish enough to go, saw great horrors, beyond that of the Flood. Great horrors, that which could unite the galaxy in peace, or destroy it."

Hakimee listened closely; Nakumee looked on with interest. A few of the humans looked at their feet.

"The planet is four days by a Covenant slipspace drive from the Prophet's homeworld. That would be forty-six hours from here by Covenant."

"The \_Isis \_has a drive based on a Covenant design," the Commander said. "Is that where Doctor Halsey and the Spartan went?"

"I don't know," Kalimee said firmly. "But it's on the same vector. They could have gone there."

"I think it's settled then. I'll set course for this mythical planet. If it's there," McTallow said with a smile. "We'll find it."

McTallow and the rest of spooks left the room. Nakumee soon followed, pausing in the doorway to take a glance at her superior.

\_She doesn't trust me.\_

Kalimee felt sick. But it didn't feel right. It was a different feeling. He was sick to his stomach, or was he hungry? Maybe he had one of those viral infections he had missed out on as a child. Maybe it was something different. \_No, \_he thought. \_It's her, she's soiling the room. \_He left and walked down the corridors back to his cabin, still sick.

\_Fourteen hours later...\_

Kalimee, Hakimee, and several numerous Human officers sat down to breakfast. Unfortunately the Unggoy had customized rations to put in their food nipples, courtesy of Section Three, but Elites such as Kalimee didn't.

Hakimee had gone to get seconds and Nakumee apparently was in the restroom, which left Kalimee with the humans. Helljumpers such as Kalimee were intended to be independent of outside supply and command, so being around around a bunch of humans was something he was having to get used to.

"Hey."

Kalimee looked up, to his right, then to his left and finally found the disturbance: a human, Kaller to be precise.

"May I sit here?" he asked, pointing to a seat on Kalimee's left.

"Yes, Human."

The human sat and began to dissect its plate. It was this time that

Nakumee decided to emerge from wherever. She walked across the opposite side of the room and took a spot adjacent a pair of female humans. Kalimee was disgusted, yet drawn.

"Liker her?" Kaller asked.

Kalimee was confused. How do you 'like' another being? You can either tolerate their presence or you make them leave.

"What?" he asked, taking a safe route.

"You know..."

"Kalimee performed the human expression of 'shaking' one's head. He hoped the human would be able to understand.

The human gave Kalimee a weird look and left. The remainder of the meal was unevenful.

This had gone on long enough. Kalimee wasn't about to let some...female, destroy his unit. She wasn't going to the legendary planet. He didn't want her there. He finally made it to the right section of the ship, and stood outside her door for a few moments, catching his breath and readying himself for the confrontation between superior and subordinate.

The door opened and the lower officer walked out. Kalimee tried to speak in the most stoic, emotionless voice he could muster.

"I am giving you orders concerning your role in this operation."

"You don't think I can do it," she said coldly. "You think I'll be a liability, you think I'll hurt your precious \_platoon." \_

"You are not going," Kalimee said flatly.

Nakumee gave a quiet huff at this and turned around heading back inside.

"I didn't get all the way here to be left on a ship."

"Why aren't you with our own anyway?" Kalimee sneered, obviously beginning to lose his temper.

Nakumee sighed and sat down. "After I had reached the Age of Trials, I applied for a position in the infantry hoping someday I could be in Special Operations."

"What happened?" Kalimee asked as he sat down beside her.

"I didn't make it," she growled. "They said I lacked stamina. Really they were afraid.

"Afraid?"

"Afraid. Afraid of my abilities, afraid of what I am."

"Because you are..." She shot him a glare he knew wasn't a good thing to see.

"I spent the next eight orbits in a Covenant frigate, watching displays and making sure the Unggoy don't play with the engineering machinery. After the Prophet's betrayal, I was transferred to a destroyer and was put in charge of the engineering compartments." Kalimee nodded. "They wanted you out of the way."

"Yes, that and the rest of us. They think we can't fight. I showed them." Nakumee turned her gaze straight into Kalimee's.

"After fighting my way through a security team I hijacked a Seraph fighter and flew to the planet the destroyer was orbiting...Earth." Kalimee's jaws expanded greatly.

"You deserted."

"Yes."

"I will leave you now."

"Yes, Excellency."

### 3. Planets, Spartans, and Misspent Youth

Kalimee was glad to be back where he truly belonged. In a HEV about to engage in operations.

After stowing his gear, a BR55, an M6C pistol, and two M7 submachine guns, plus several grenades, he eyed the clock counting down to drop. Just twenty-five seconds to go.

Kalimee wondered how the new 'guys' were doing. Mehmeep had probably never dropped from orbit in a pod, Nakumee deserted and had to kill a few to do it, so a little airtime wouldn't hurt her.

\_This thing's cramped. \_It was to be expected of an Elite in human quarters, his species normally went in standing up after all.

Zero. The initial rush of gee force caught Kalimee off guard, but after that it was just a nice, smooth ride, at least until they reached the atmosphere and the heat got intense. The Grunts would probably start wailing about now.

The HEVs entered the atmosphere.

SPARTAN-087 eyed the sky intently. The balls of fire streaking across the sky were not a good sign, it meant ODS'Ts, who else would the UNSC send to kill a Spartan? Their contempt for her and her kind was legendary.

"Kelly."

Kelly turned to see Doctor Halsey standing at the entrance to the cave complex, still wearing the now brown lab coat they had first seen her in back on Reach.

"Kelly I need your help moving some of this Forerunner machinery."

"Doctor, we need to move, the UNSC is here."

Dr. Halsey shook her head.

"No, Kelly, we've run away far too long, they will find us. Hopefully I will done what I needed to do.

\_Her and her stupid guilt. Doesn't she see they will kill us? \_Kelly reluctantly walked over to the Doctor and they brought the salvaged Forerunner junk into their hideout.

The cave was narrow at first but soon expanded into a high ceiling with exotic carvings and decorated computer terminals coating the walls.

They soon came to a giant chasm, bottomed by lava and molten rock, stretching thousands of meters down into the planet. The Doctor stopped at a console and after pushing a few buttons a white luminescent surface crossed the giant hole. A light bridge.

Once they were on the other side Dr. Halsey deactivated the bridge to slow down any pursuers, and they silently continued deeper into the cave.

\_She was almost to the Seraph now. All she had was one more hallway and she would be in the right floor of the hallway. \_

\_After pushing several Unggoy aside she ran through the automatic door. \_

\_She was disappointed to find that the Seraph was guarded by two Sangheili. They were in blue armor but so was her and she was only armed with a plasma pistol she had taken from an Unggoy. They had plasma rifles.\_

\_Two streams of plasma began to strike her shields as she darted from one end of the Seraph to another. After a couple minutes of firing a few potshots, hiding to let her shields recharge she finally summoned the courage to release a large bulb of plasma at one of the guards. She used the few seconds of confusion to jump into the Seraph's cockpit, shake off the other guard, shoot the controls for the hangar 'door' and flew out of the ship.\_

Kalimee perspired heavily as his pod raced down at great speed. Without energy shielding to act as a thermos, the temperature in the 305th's HEVs were greater than what some were used too. He couldn't help but wish he would just sweat away his troubles like moisture.

\_It was intriguing. They were his species, they were just...different. He did the only thing a curious, pre-trained Sangheili could do...he followed.\_

\_They led him through the city, the streets were crowded with all sorts of species. Sangheili, Unggoy, a few Kig-Yar. Kalimee wove his way through the crowd, careful to keep them in his sight.\_

\_They would occasionally open their quadruple jaws to speak in their all-to-low voices. Kalim was fascinated by this other...gender. It was like nothing he had ever encountered. It reminded him of the

time, back when his father was a Field Commander, an Unggoy in the unit had randomly said, "Hard to tell, but me not female."\_\_

\_He was led into a back corridor, the females continued for a few hundred meters before turning abruptly and going through a set of small automatic doors.\_\_

\_Kalim stood just out of range of the door's motion sensors. His gaze turned to the readout on the door side.\_\_

"\_Female Refitting Chamber."\_\_

\_Kalim eventually got the courage to walk in. The stares were sharper than needler rounds. He had made a mistake.\_\_

\_Kalim ducked and was able to dodge the first inactive plasma grenade, but several struck him hard as he turned to leave. The young Sangheili ran down the alley as fast as his legs could carry him with the females in hot pursuit, those that were armored at least. \_

\_It was Kalim's misfortune to run right into a security patrol. He fell, taking several Unggoy with him. As he got up to continue his flight, the scarlet-clad Sangheili in command firmly grabbed Kalim's shoulder. He took a deep breath and looked up. The soldier did not look friendly one bit. Kalim looked around for a means of escape, but large crowds and armed Unggoy surrounded him.\_\_

"\_Where are you going, young one?" Kalim knew it was going to be a long day.\_\_

#### 4. Kelly, Halsey, and Mehmeep's Food Nipple

Author's Note: I am discontinuing "March of Olives: How It all Began" for the time being to concentrate on this story. I apologize for the long delay. Also bear with me that I've never before \_attempted \_to write a romance, particularly not of another specie. Now then, back to 'The Halsey Affair.'

\* \* \*

><p><p>

Kalimee woke up from his little childhood memory just in time for the main chute of his HEV deploy. The pod slowed to only a few meters per second, then reaccelerated as the chute fell away for the final plunge.

The HEVs of the 305th landed with loud thumps over an area of approximately ten acres.

Using his legs and the rear of the pod as a counterweight, Kalimee kicked open the exit door and jumped out.

He examined the ground, consisting largely of dark rock and volcanic ash, to ensure it was safe and admired the other HEVs as his troops climbed out. Thankfully it was a textbook drop, all pods had landed safely. Kalimee strolled over to another cluster where he saw Nakumee grabbing various metallic parts out of an extra pod. He stopped to watch.

She proceeded to then, before his eyes, assemble a Warthog while the rest of the 305th gathered their gear, the Unggoy check their methane levels, and prep for patrol.

Nakumee climbed into the warthog's driver's seat, with Kalimee reluctantly taking the side seat scanning the area for the fugitives with the scope of his battle rifle, and two Unggoy, one standing on top of the other, manning the chain gun in the rear, while Hakimee scouted ahead with his S2 AM Sniper Rifle. The rest of the unit just followed behind the best that they could.

Between the steps and the waddles, the roar of a Warthog's engines, and hot breezes of a fiery planet, a small tube fell to the volcanic sand...

Two large armored hands picked up the tube. They turned it, examining every square inch for any evidence of whose it was.

Mehmep, Private First Class, 305th Drop Jet Platoon

The Spartan had seen these before. On Jericho VII, Sigma Octanus, Ascendant Justice...Reach. A brief tear appeared at the bottom of her eye before the thought process continued.

Before they had only been on bodies, but whatever the reason this one was not, it still meant one thing...Grunts.

The Covenant were here.

Kelly raced back to Doctor Halsey, winding through the massive Forerunner catacombs to reach her.

Doctor Halsey was examining a Forerunner computer when the Spartan crept up.

"Hello Kelly," Doctor Halsey said in a monotone voice.

"We have a problem, ma'am," Kelly announced.

"What would that be Kelly?"

"The Covenant are here, first ONI, now the Covenant."

Doctor Halsey returned to her work, meticulously running diagnostic after diagnostic on the computer and its capabilities.

"Well? Kelly frowned inside her helmet, "Aren't you concerned?"

"The Covenant won't find us."

"What do you mean they won't find us?"

"They won't."

Kelly groaned quietly and walked off to assume a position at the entrance to the subterranean complex.

"You stupid Grunt, now everyone will know we're here!"

"But me have other nipple..."

"You were supposed to dump that nipple when we told you, soldier! You disobeyed a direct order!"

It was then that Kalimee walked into the hut. He quickly looked at his second, the cowering Unggoy, then back to Hakimee.

"What's going on?"

"He dropped his food nipple," Hakimee said quickly, pointing to Mehmeep.

"Why is that important?"

"The Spartan could find it."

\_Hell. I should have realized that immediately. \_

"Ok, we're going to move the camp shortly. I don't want the Spartan to sneak up on us in the night."

"Then good night, sir."

Kalimee walked back to the other side of the camp where the Officer's quarters were. He was passing the last hut before his own when he heard an eye-liquid expenditure. He stopped, and finding that the doorlock was not active, invited himself inside.

Naba Nakumee was sitting on a bench adjacent to the sleeping unit, twitching every few microunits.

"Hello Lieutenant," Kalimee said, trying to keep his voice as level as possible.

"Excellency." Kalimee's stomach twisted.

"Is there a problem Lieutenant Nakumee?"

"No."

Kalimee's stomach twisted even more. She was hiding something from him!

"I order you to tell me what your problem is."

End  
file.